MEETING SUMMARY
SR 520 BRIDGE REPLACEMENT AND HOV PROJECT
ADVISORY COMMITTEE
St. Lukes Lutheran Church, Bellevue WA
October 6, 2003 3:00 – 5:00 P.M.

Welcome and Meeting Objectives

Pat Serie, EnviroIssues, opened the meeting by welcoming the Advisory Committee and members of the public. The objectives for the meeting were as follow: bring the committee up to speed on project status, including the alternatives to be evaluated in the EIS; provide an update on the SR-520 tolling assumptions for the EIS and current tolling study; and report on an upcoming water quality workshop and community outreach activities.

Maureen Sullivan, WSDOT, described recent staffing changes. Les Rubstello, previous SR-520 project manager, left WSDOT for a traffic engineer position with the City of Lynnwood. Julie Meredith has replaced Les as project engineering manager. Also, Kinyan Lui has joined WSDOT as a project engineer to work on SR-520.

Project Update

Maureen updated the committee on recent project developments. The nickel gas tax took effect on July 1, 2003. The Nickel Funding Package, has allowed the project to move forward into the environmental impact statement (EIS) phase. The tax allocates $53.2 million for the SR-520 EIS, right of way (ROW) and design work. An additional $3.5 million was set-aside for a separate I-5 noise wall project that is scheduled to be complete by July 2005. Consultants are back on board and a project office will open in December that will house the consultants and WSDOT staff.

At the Executive Committee meeting held on July 15, 2003, the Committee approved revised project limits; and the three EIS alternatives, including 4 lanes (with and without expanded pontoons for high-capacity transit (HCT)), and 6 and 8 lanes with expanded pontoons for HCT. The State Legislature asked WSDOT to continue studying the 8-lane alternative, including improvements on I-5 needed to address impacts of 8-lane capacity. The full cost of the 8-lane alternative is not accurately reflected in current project information because the impacts at the I-5 and I-405 interchanges are currently being evaluated. The Regional Transportation Improvement District (RTID) has estimated available funding for SR-520 at approximately $1-1.5 billion, with the rest of the cost covered by revenue from tolling. The Washington State Transportation Commission has identified a new SR-520 as suitable for tolling. Current state legislation does not allow for tolling on SR-520, because the bridge was tolled once already, so new legislation will be required.

Julie Meredith, WSDOT, provided more detail on the project schedule and alternatives. The draft EIS is due out in mid-2005. Last month the project began looking at the impacts to I-5 with the 8-lane alternative, as SR-520 westbound traffic would be merging onto southbound I-5. Construction estimates are also being developed. The design of the preferred plan, along with ROW purchasing, permitting, and utilities, will begin July 2005. The design of the preferred plan will continue into 2008. Community outreach will continue throughout the life of the project.

The I-5 and SR-520 interchange noise wall design and construction is a separate project with separate funding and timeline. That project has begun meeting with the affected communities and is estimated to finish construction by end of fiscal year 2005.

Julie gave an update on each of the three alternatives proposed for the SR-520 bridge replacement:

4-lane Alternative

The 4-lane alternative adds a ramp from westbound SR-520 to the I-5 express lanes to the south. It would have five lanes through the Roanoke Park/Portage Bay area and no changes required on the Montlake Bridge. At the Montlake interchange, it would have 4 lanes under Montlake Boulevard, a rebuilt interchange, and inside flyer stops. There would be a pedestrian/bicycle lane from Montlake Boulevard to 96th Avenue NE and no HOV lanes. The floating bridge would be rebuilt with 4 lanes. Along the neighborhoods from Evergreen Point to Bellevue Way the westbound HOV lane would be rebuilt, shoulders would be added, and there would be an assumption of a toll plaza. There would be no change east of Bellevue Way. There is also an option to the 4-lane alternative that has all the features of the 4-lane alternative, but the addition of larger pontoons to allow future HCT.

6-lane Alternative

The 6-lane alternative would add a reversible ramp from SR-520 to the I-5 express lanes to and from the south. It would have 6 to 9 lanes between Roanoke Park and Portage Bay with a lid over SR-520 at 10th Avenue East. There would be 6 lanes under Montlake Boulevard and a rebuilt interchange with a wider eastbound on-ramp and westbound off-ramp. A signal would be added at the westbound ramp terminal. A lid and inside flyer stops would also be constructed at the Montlake interchange. There would be a pedestrian/bicycle lane from Montlake Boulevard to 96th Avenue NE. In addition, there would be inside HOV lanes from I-5 to Bellevue Way with a re-stripe of HOV lanes to the inside from Bellevue Way to West Lake Sammamish Parkway. The floating bridge would be rebuilt with 6 lanes and would be sized to allow for future HCT. On the east shore, an eastbound HOV lane would be added and a rebuilt westbound HOV lane. Shoulders would be added along with lids at 76th, 84th, and 92nd. There would also be rebuilt flyer stops on the inside and an assumed toll plaza. There would be a rebuilt interchange at Bellevue Way.

8-lane alternative

The 8-lane alternative would add a reversible ramp from SR-520 to the I-5 express lanes to and from the south. I-5 would also be widened as needed to accommodate SR-520 traffic. The widening of I-5 is currently being studied, and has not been included in the WSDOT Cost Estimation Validation Process (CEVP). There would be 9 lanes between Roanoke Park and Portage Bay. There would also be a lid over SR-520 at 10th Avenue East. There would be 6 lanes under Montlake Boulevard and a rebuilt interchange with a wider eastbound on-ramp and westbound off-ramp. A signal would be added at the westbound ramp terminal. A lid and inside flyer stops would also be constructed at the Montlake interchange. There would be a pedestrian/bicycle lane from Montlake Boulevard to 96th Avenue NE. There would be inside HOV lanes from I-5 to Bellevue Way with a re-stripe of HOV lanes to the inside from Bellevue Way to West Lake Sammamish Parkway. The floating bridge would be rebuilt with 8 lanes and pontoons sized to allow future HCT. On the east shore an eastbound HOV lane would be added along with a rebuilt westbound HOV lane. Shoulders would be added along with lids at 76th, 84th, and 92nd. There would also be rebuilt flyer stops on the inside and a toll plaza. The area east of Bellevue Way is being studied to identify what changes are necessary to accommodate 8 lanes of traffic. The changes necessary east of Bellevue Way have not been included in the CEVP.

Comments/Questions

- Eugene Wasserman, Neighborhood Business Council, asked if the RTID is talking about a range of funding scenarios for HOV from Montlake to Bellevue Way. *Low-end figures might be enough for HOV across the water.*
- Eugene asked who makes the ultimate decision on the preferred alternative. *That is a joint decision by the FHWA, WSDOT, and the Sound Transit Board, approval by the State Transportation Commission.*
- Mark Weed, Fisher Properties, asked why, the FHWA is involved. *The project hopes to receive federal funding and the EIS is a federal (NEPA) EIS.*
- Virginia Gunby, 1000 Friends of Washington, commented that the legislature could change. She asked whether a 4-F evaluation would be done. *Yes*
- Hans Aschenbach, Roosevelt Neighbors' Association, asked why the 4-lane alternative did not show added capacity. Hans continued that with the addition of shoulders approximately 190 more cars per hour could travel across the bridge because of reduced congestion time caused by accidents. *For EIS purposes added capacity needs additional lanes. It is looking at the common flow of traffic.*
- Hans stated that the addition of shoulders is a change and should be acknowledged because the bottom line is capacity. The 4-lane alternative is being downplayed in the public. *We have tried to show that in the benefit category.*
- Mark stated that added capacity in the 4-lane alternative is a marginal increase and we should not highlight such a marginal increase.

- Virginia asked if the Montlake interchange ramp would have preferential treatment for transit. *It would be a metered main line. A traffic analysis would need to be performed to look at the possibility of a preferential lane for transit.*
- Hans asked what would be done to address noise pollution for the flyer stops under Montlake. Hans suggested an enclosed area with bus notification. *Pier walls would block much of the noise. This issue would be addressed with any alternative, but later in final design.*
- Kirk McKinley, pedestrian advocate, commented he had heard of using plexi-glass to block noise pollution.
- Mark commented that a well-designed flyer stop is important for safety reasons.
- Jean Amick, Laurelhurst Community Club, asked for a clarification on the length of the lane coming from SR-520 to the I-5 express lanes. *It would be a transit lane from the flyer stop at Montlake to the I-5 express ramps.*
- Eugene commented that the 4-lane alternative would not be the same as the current configuration because of the need to rebuild the Portage Bay Bridge. He requested that more detail be given and consider the possibility of describing the portion from Roanoke to Montlake, differently.
- Roland White, Kirkland Transportation Commission, asked if the 4-lane alternative includes rebuilding the support piers. *Yes.*
- Eugene asked if the EIS would provide enough information just to reconstruct the bridge in case of funding shortfalls. *Most likely. However, it is unlikely the project would get permission to only construct the bridge portion. There is also the seismic problem on Portage Bay.*
- John Resha, Greater Redmond Transportation Management Association (GRTMA), asked about the transportation demand management (TDM) portion of these alternatives. *TDM will be included in all alternatives. It will be shown in the future.*
- Mark commented that if the ramp from the express lanes of I-5 were reversible traffic would back up to Lynnwood.
- Kirk asked if the option to realign 10th made it in to the EIS. *No. The Roanoke exit does not get eliminated, which had been in past designs. The new interchange at Montlake would eliminate the U-turn on Montlake.*
- Eugene asked if transit service would have direct access from the hospital. *A fly-over option is being considered.*
- Mark asked how northbound traffic on Montlake would get onto SR-520. *All movements would be allowed at the signal.*
- Elizabeth Newstrum, Yarrow Point, asked how much space would be taken up for the flyer stops and roads leading in and out with the small lid proposed for 92nd Avenue. Elizabeth proposed that some open space should be left on proposed lids to be used as a drop-off. Currently an unused flyer stop is being used for a turn around. *That will be addressed in final design; options are available.*
- Eugene asked if WSDOT is looking at how to reroute buses. *That would be done at a later point.*
- Kirk asked if the 8-lane alternative looks at putting a lid on I-5. *No, only at 10th.*

- Bertha Eades, Redmond, asked where HCT was going to be on the bridge. *That would be a decision for the future; only expanded pontoons are assumed at this point.*
- Hans asked what type of HCT is being considered, and if it is rail, where it would go. *The EIS only shows expanded pontoons that at sometime in the future could hold the extra load of HCT. It does not choose a particular technology nor determine its route.*
- Hans asked if the project would be addressing the Mercer weave. *No.*
- Roland asked if the effects of the Mercer weave would show on the 8-lane EIS. *Yes, it would show once the alternative is modeled.*
- Eugene suggested that the project look at informing people of the impacts from Montlake to I-5. Right now, people do not think it would change that much. *We have started talking to people. For example, we have gone out and met with the Yacht Club at Portage Bay.*

Tolling Study Update

Brent Baker, Parsons Brinckerhoff, gave an update on the ongoing SR-520 Toll Feasibility Study. They have completed the tolled traffic and revenue projections for the 6-lane alternative. In this scenario HOV 3+ are considered toll free. Projections using the 4-lane alternative are being studied currently. In the 4-lane scenario HOV 3+ is tolled. They are also currently examining the revenue yields of different pricing strategies.

There are many interrelated factors that influence revenue from tolls. Travel demand is one of the major factors influencing revenue. Economic growth, population and employment, and the future network of alternative routes and modes impact travel demand. Toll rates depend on the operating objectives of the project and on the value users place on their time. The toll rates would be adjusted based on time of day because of demand. The study showed, through modeling and surveying of current SR-520 users, a lower bound toll range of $0.00 to $3.00 on a one-way toll and an upper bound range of $0.75 to $4.60. The one-way toll rate is given in 2014 dollars.

A key criterion when evaluating tolls is toll diversion behavior. There are many aspects that go into toll diversion, including mode change to HOV or transit, choosing an alternate route or time of travel, change of trip destination, lowering trip frequency, and eliminating the trip altogether. The study is showing a potential toll diversion between 18% and 33% of 2014 peak demand depending on toll rate assumption. The study shows a relatively minor increase in I-90 traffic during PM peak due to limited capacity on I-90. Route diversion to I-90 is much higher during off-peak times and is more sensitive to the SR-520 toll rate.

The study includes preliminary annual revenue projections for 2014. The upper bound figure is $82 million and the lower is $54 million. Both incorporate a 5% deduction for electronic toll collection errors and violations. The annual revenue projection with a

deduction of 20% for maintenance and operations gives an upper bound estimate of $66 million and lower estimate of $43 million. The 20% figure used for deductions is only a rough estimate. The study is currently trying to identify the correct figure to use for operations and maintenance deductions.

An upcoming report in November will include an analysis of the 4-lane alternative with HOVs paying a toll, toll collections and operations cost estimates, and financial scenarios looking at bond funding and construction funding expected from toll revenues.

Comments/Questions

- Mark asked if both westbound and eastbound traffic would be tolled. Mark also asked if there was concern by the project that a lot of people would be against tolls. He commented that the business community knows tolls are a reality for bridge replacement. *Yes, it is true that tolls are a reality. Both westbound and eastbound traffic would be tolled.*
- Eugene asked what area would be tolled. *The bridge.*
- Jean commented that the toll should be free for HOVs in all alternatives. *It is not a policy decision to toll HOVs in the 4-lane alternative. It is only to give a span of results during modeling.*
- Bertha commented that by tolling the bridge only people going across the bridge pay for the project. Eugene supported Bertha's point by commenting that Portage Bay is also a bridge. *In general, we use the bridge as a tolling point to take away from the impacts of cars going through neighborhoods to reach access points that are past toll points.*
- Will vanpools be considered? *There are ways to exempt vanpools from tolls.*
- Eugene requested that on future handouts you put in parentheses today's dollars along with 2014 dollars.
- Virginia asked what expansion assumption did the study use for I-90. *We used a no expansion model for I-90.*
- Hans asked if the study looks at changes of residence. *Some, but it is hard to do with modeling.*
- Mark asked if the study was able to extract the routes of diversion resulting from the 18% to 33% diversion behavior? *Not exactly. The model does a good job of showing route diversion, but it is hard to see which route gets chosen.*
- Eugene asked why SR-522 diversion is not mentioned. *Study of SR-522 will be done but by 2014 it would already be over capacity.*
- Mark asked what the toll would be for the Tacoma Narrows Bridge. *$5.00 for a round trip in the first year and then $6.00 by 2014.*
- Eugene commented that some people think that growth projections are really high. *The study has used more current conservative growth projections.*
- Elizabeth asked if tolls would ever be lifted. *That is a legislative question.*
- Eugene asked if tolls would be looked at for I-90. *Yes.*

- Bob asked what the footprint would be for the tolling operations. *Right now, we are just showing it on the eastside. The hope is that most toll collection would be done electronically, with very limited tollbooth need. However, to ensure the EIS impact analysis is conservative, tollbooth footprint will be assumed on the east shore.*

Other Issues

Pat informed everyone of the West End Bridge Design Workshop on October 14th at Saint Demetrios Church in the Montlake neighborhood. She also advertised the public meetings scheduled for October 29th at MOHAI in Seattle and October 30th at St. Lukes Lutheran Church in Bellevue. The public meetings will be from 4:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. with a presentation at 5:30 p.m.

Julie informed the group of the three sunken vessels found on the west side of the lake near where the new bridge would go. The three vessels consist of two barges and one schooner. They are currently conducting surveys to uncover further details; divers will be working in the next few weeks.

Also, Julie reported that based on early action recommendations of the Trans-Lake Washington Study Committee, the Coast Guard has changed the winter Montlake Bridge closure hours. The bridge will no longer be required to open for vessels from 7:00 to 10:00 am in the morning and 3:30 to 7:30 pm in the evening.

Committee Members

Present	Last	First	Organization
X	Amick	Jean	Laurelhurst Community Club
	Andrews	Deborah	Arboretum Foundation
X	Aschenbach	Hans	Roosevelt Neighbors' Association
	Culp	Barbara	Bicycle Alliance of WA
	Adam	Miles	City of Medina
X	Dent	Bob	Hunts Point
	Dubman	Jonathan	Montlake Community Council
X	Eades	Bertha	Redmond
X	Gunby	Virginia	1000 Friends of Washington
	Hallenback	Mark	UW TRAC
	Hart	Fred	Greater University of Chamber of Commerce
	Shoemaker	Delee	Microsoft
	Hill	Gregory	Streeter Architects
	Holman	Linda	Univar USA
	Hurley	Peter	Transportation Choices Coalition
	Joneson	Kingsley	Portage Bay/Roanoke Park Community Council

Present	Last	First	Organization
	MacIsaac	Jim	Eastside Transportation Association
X	McKinley	Kirk	Pedestrian Advocate
X	Newstrum	Elizabeth	Yarrow Point
	Odell	Nina	Puget Sound Energy
	Ray	Janet	AAA of Washington
	Reckers	Jim	Eastside Community Council
X	Resha	John	Greater Redmond Transportation Management Association
	Tate	Bob	Clyde Hill
X	Wasserman	Eugene	Neighborhood Business Council
X	Weed	Mark	Fisher Properties
	White	Rich	Boeing
X	White	Roland	Kirkland Transportation Commission

Public Participants

- David Allen, City of Seattle
- Larry Sinnot, Ravenna-Bryant Community Association

Project Team Members

- Maureen Sullivan, WSDOT-UCO
- Julie Meredith, WSDOT-UCO
- Greg Wornell, WSDOT-UCO
- Kinyan Lui, WSDOT-UCO
- Brad Phillips, Parametrix
- Michael Hornvendt, Parametrix
- Lorie Parker, CH2M Hill
- Brent Baker, Parsons Brinckerhoff
- Pat Serie, EnviroIssues
- Joy Goldberg, EnviroIssues
- Bryan Jarr, EnviroIssues